

ST GEORGE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

Address	47 Warncliffe Road, Ivanhoe East
Significance	Local (likely State)
Construction Date	1936/53 (remnant part of original hall) and 1963-64 (main part)
Period	Mid-20 th century and late 20 th century
Date Inspected	January 2021



Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

St George's Anglican Church at 47 Warncliffe Road, Ivanhoe East is significant. It consists of significant fabric remaining from the original church/hall, built in two stages during the mid-20th century, and the main phase of construction of 1963-64.

The original hall to the southern boundary dates to 1936 (part, east end) and 1953 (most, west end); it has a gable roof clad in glazed terracotta tiles and ridge ventilators. The red brick walls are painted and feature buttresses with timber-framed openings. The original hall is a contributory element that has been well-integrated into the complex by the architects.

All of the original fabric of the main 1960s part is significant. It consists of tan brick walls ('Selkirk's Modular Santan' brick) and a low skillion roof following the site's slope, clad in tray deck. The most striking feature is the 70-columned colonnade of tall, bush-pole columns (now painted red-brown, though originally had a dark brown finish) with an arched fascia (originally a light colour) that extends across the front and another two sides of the courtyard, as well as the raised walkway to the north side of the church and west elevation. The roof of the colonnade is steel-framed with additional bracing provided by cables, especially where open on both sides. The timber-framed openings – windows and doors – are original. Significant elements of the church interior include the face brick walls, original timber ceiling and furniture (organ, altar, pulpit, lectern, pews), white cylindrical light fittings, baked glass (on a brick substrate) mural of 'Christ in Glory', and bronze baptismal font.

The four eucalypts to the north-west corner and the two exotics (likely Ash trees) at the south end of the courtyard are significant. The other trees are not significant.

How is it Significant?

St George's Anglican Church at 47 Warndcliffe Road, Ivanhoe East is of historical, social, and aesthetic significance to the City of Banyule.

Why is it Significant?

St George's Anglican Church is of historical and social significance as having been the centre of Anglican community life in this part of the municipality for three-quarters of a century, though it was acquired earlier (1930). The first, modest building on the site, part of which survives, was erected in 1936 for the growing community and was enlarged in 1953 with a further fund-raising campaign. A decade later (1963-64), a grander vision for the site was realised to support the religious uses/needs of the local Anglican community. This final phase was to the design of the eminent architect, Frederick Romberg of the renowned practice of (Grounds,) Romberg and Boyd and is also significant as being one of the few religious projects undertaken by them. (Criteria A and G)

St George's Anglican Church is of aesthetic significance as a highly distinguished modernist church complex that unusually incorporates most of a pre-existing church hall. The overall form is cuboid with a gently sloping roof. The main part allows the downpipes to be concentrated onto the northern elevation and integrated into the consistent bay delineation of the exterior. Its format is unique, consisting of a square footprint with a central courtyard that opens onto the street through a tall colonnade of bush poles extends about much of the building. The design by Frederick Romberg is a rare instance of such a pronounced use of vernacular detailing (bush poles) on a clearly urban building, which provides a level of grandeur that softens the otherwise modernist rigour of the geometry and configuration of openings. The church's interior has a calming, muted palette and strong connection to the exterior and is open to the street, serving to demystify the church activities. It is further enhanced by artist-designed elements (mural and baptismal font) and complementary timber furniture. In any context, this design is a tour de force. (Criterion E)

Description

The nearly square site has an area of about 2770m² and gently slopes about 3 metres from the south-east to the north-west corner.



East side

The building consists of two distinct sections about a courtyard – the larger 1960s section and part of the earlier hall (1936 and 1953) in the southwest corner. The building is located close to the south boundary but is otherwise broadly centred on the site, with setbacks in the order of 5 to 7 metres from the other three boundaries. The site is otherwise either hard paved (concrete or asphalt) or has areas of lawn (courtyard and southwest corner). There are several trees, including some established eucalypts in the northwest corner, two small deciduous exotics (courtyard), and a few shrubs (north side and the southwest corner). In the front setback, there is a flagpole and signage.

1960s Building

The 1960s section forms about three-quarters of the building fabric about the central courtyard. The northern wing is occupied by the St Georges Church, signified by an offset cross above the entrance, and the southern wing by Evans Hall. The remaining western section includes offices, multi-purpose areas, kitchens, etc.

It has a low skillion roof, which follows the ground line, clad in metal sheeting and is two-storey or double-height (the church). Given the slope of the roof, the downpipes are all located to the north elevation.

The east/street side is defined by the substantial colonnade with 30-foot-tall gumtree trunks (poles), which opens onto, and extends about three sides of the courtyard. The colonnade roof is steel-framed with additional bracing provided by cables where it is open on both sides (ie in front of the courtyard). A segmental-arched fascia extends between the poles, a profile which is reflected in that of the openings across the building.



Courtyard, west elevation



Courtyard, north elevation

The walls are faced in tan bricks (Selkirk's Modular in Santan), which are laid in stretcher bond and are squarer than standard dimensions. The bricks vary slightly in colour and have been laid so that subtle areas of banding or panelling have been created. Longer (regular dimensioned) bricks have been employed to the segmental-arched lintels to the openings. Vertical cracking through the bricks and joints is evident in some areas.



North elevation



West elevation

The pattern of openings is consistent across the building and contain either windows or paired French doors. There are distinct zones with blank walls according to the function of each part of the building. To the nave of the church (north wing), the openings are limited to the ground level but extend across both west wing levels. Given the slope, there is a concrete sill/spandrel to the lower-level windows of the courtyard, increasing in width to the north.

The north elevation has a raised concrete deck with a timber balustrade along the length of the nave of the church, where the colonnade returns. The rhythm of the downpipes at the west end continues that of the adjacent colonnade. Openings to this elevation are either to the lower part (nave) or upper part of the wall (sanctuary).

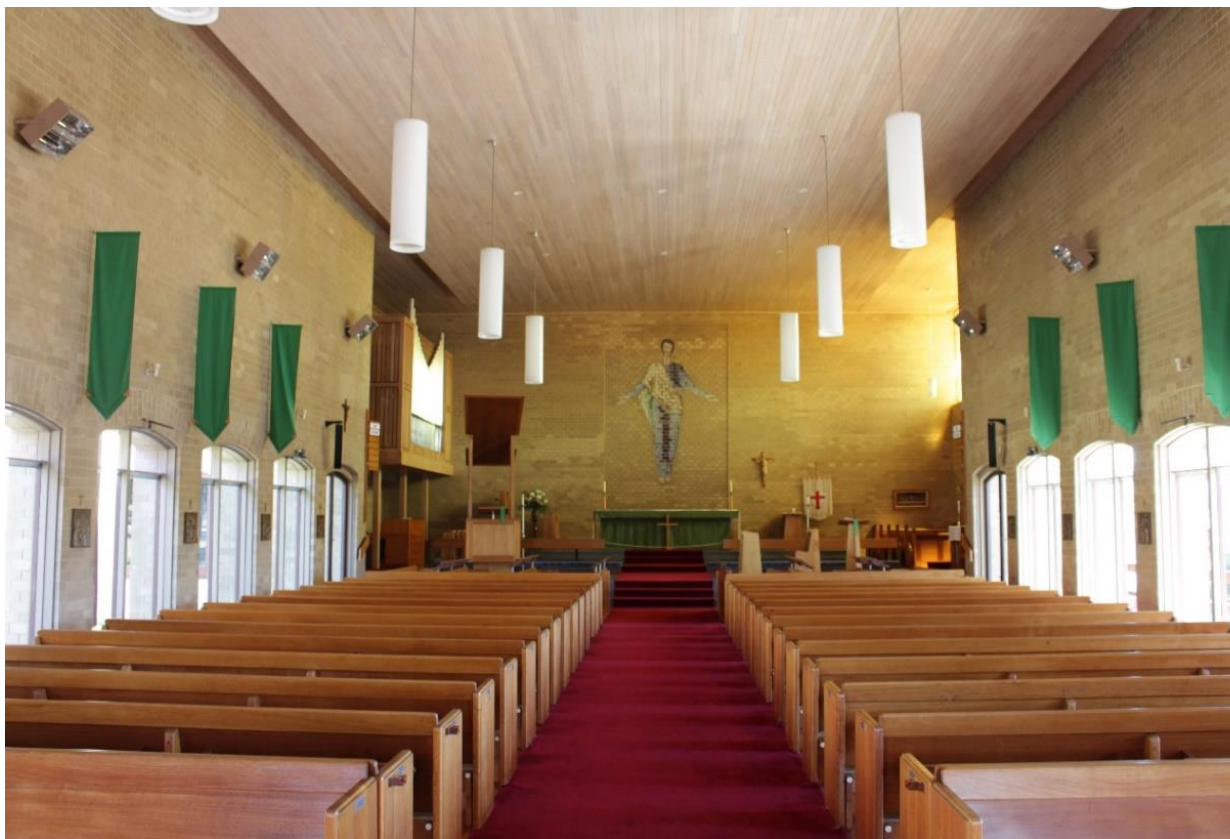
A similar colonnade extends the rear/west elevation length, which incorporates a two levelled verandah and stair at the south end. The latter has a timber deck and an original single-membered balustrade, in front of which a metal palisade railing has been installed. Along both levels of the verandah are a similar pattern of timber-framed openings as to the front part of the building. The crypt at the lower/basement level in the northwest corner is defined by a group of five openings above, which is a non-original, utilitarian timber-framed canopy clad in corrugated Perspex sheeting. It is currently employed as an opportunity shop.

Church Interior

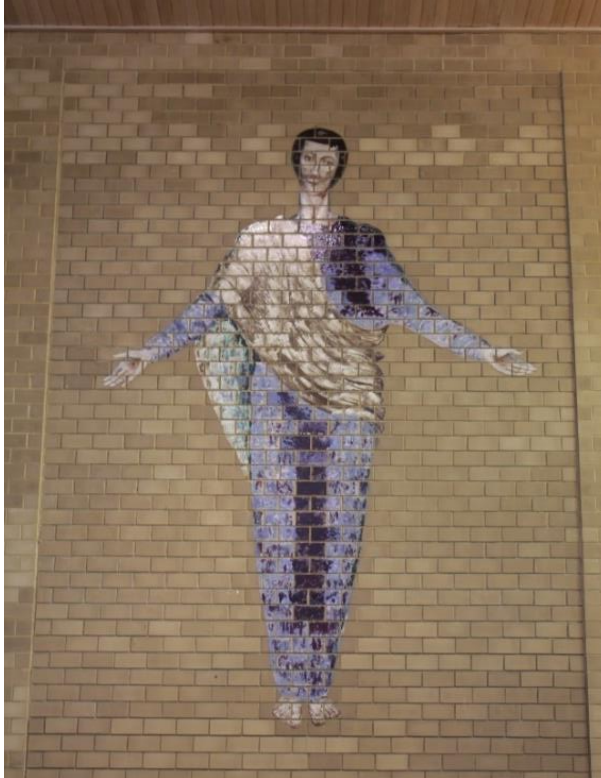
The interior of the church is an unencumbered T-shaped space, consisting of a long nave and a wider sanctuary. It has a fine acoustic quality and is regularly used as a performance space for choirs and the like.

The walls are the same tan bricks employed to the exterior and the ceiling, recessed in part, is lined with blond timber boards. Ten tubular, white glass pendant lights hang over the pews. The floor is lined with red carpet, replacing the original blue. The three sides of the nave are mostly punctuated by large openings at ground level – either windows or paired doors.

The focal point of the sanctuary is the altar, with an organ to the south side and four high-level windows (with a cross-like glazing bar configuration) illuminating it. Purpose-designed timber furniture includes the altar, pulpit, lectern, and pews.



Other elements of note are the mosaic mural of 'Christ in Glory' by Jean Atkins behind the altar and the bronze baptismal font by Vincas Jemantis near the front entry.



Glory of Christ mural of glazed bricks



Bronze Baptismal Font

Original Church/Hall

The remaining part of the original church/hall to the southern boundary dates to 1936 (part, east end) and 1953 (most, west end). This section has a gable roof clad in glazed terracotta tiles and ridge ventilators. The stretcher bond, red brick walls are painted to the courtyard but unpainted to the rear/west elevation and feature buttresses. The openings are timber-framed, with the board-type doors likely being original; however, the windows vary – some are original (multi-paned) while others likely date to the 1960s phase (tripartite with central pointed-arched, fixed pane and flanking louvres).



Earlier Hall – north elevation



Earlier Hall – west elevation

History

Context

The City of Banyule covers the unceded Country of the Wurundjeri-willam people, who have inhabited and managed its landscape for thousands of generations and maintain an ongoing cultural connection.¹ The lightly wooded grasslands of what became known as 'Ivanhoe' were quickly targeted for sheep runs and by timber-cutters from the 'illegal squatter camp (est. 1835) downstream of the *Birrarung*/Yarra at Melbourne.² However, as part of the 'Heidelberg' district in the Parish of Keelbundora, this area passed rapidly into private hands via an auction in Sydney Town in 1838.³

Over the following decade, a patchwork of 'prestige' estates emerged, along with a surveyed township – *Warringal* (possibly 'eagle's nest'), later 'Heidelberg' – on the river's west bank.⁴ Productive river flats, and the demands of the gold diggings further afield, encouraged market gardening, orchards and (gradually, due to soil exhaustion and flooding) dairying; activities mostly undertaken by tenant farmers.⁵ This perceived rural idyll enticed *plein air* artists to the district during the 1880s, fixing the 'Heidelberg School' within Australia's artistic consciousness.⁶

Ivanhoe – its name stemming from Archibald Thom's 'Ivanhoe Estate' – remained a sparsely populated agricultural area until Melbourne's 'Land Boom' in the late 1880s.⁷ 'Picturesque' terrain, varied outlooks and the high repute of the broader district drew often well-off newcomers. By the turn of the century, 'Beautiful Ivanhoe' was routinely portrayed as a 'fashionable', 'exclusive locality' of 'model homes'.⁸ An improved railway connection to Melbourne in 1901 supported further middle-class growth, instigating 'four decades of slow and relatively affluent suburban sprawl' in the vicinity of Ivanhoe, Eaglemont, and Heidelberg train stations.⁹

During the interwar years, suburban Ivanhoe solidified, although its southern and eastern reaches remained primarily locked up by the expansive 'Hartlands', 'Charterisville', and 'Chelsworth' estates.¹⁰ To navigate the complexities that accompanied the subdivision of these areas (sloping land, curving streets, views) in the postwar period and galvanised by the swelling influence of modernism, many of the new and generally moneyed proprietors sought the services of an architect.¹¹ By the early 1960s, distinct enclaves of upmarket, modernist design culture were apparent in the southern reaches of Ivanhoe and Ivanhoe East, with the aesthetic and lifestyle reverberations of the modern movement also shaping infill development in the more established environs of the locale.



View near Heidelberg in Victoria, pen and ink drawing, circa 1858

(Source: Eugene von Guérard, National Gallery of Victoria)

¹ Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, October 2018, pp15-20, available online

² James Boyce, 1835: *The Founding of Melbourne & The Conquest of Australia*, Black Inc., 2011, pxi

³ Keelbundora stems from a European rendering of Kulbundora – the name of the eldest son of the important Wurundjeri *ngurungaeta* (essentially 'head man') Billibellary. ('Suburban Native Names', *Argus* 28 April 1906, p5). One of the earliest manifestations of local governance in the Port Phillip District (1840), the fluctuating borders of municipal Heidelberg mirrored its growth, as it was reformatting into a Road District (1860), Shire (1871) and then City (1934). It was amalgamated as the City of Banyule in 1994.

⁴ Donald S Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, Melbourne University Press, 1972, p13

⁵ Robert P Whitworth, *Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer*, F F Bailliere, 1879, pp237

⁶ Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, sections 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.5, and 2.3.10; and Janine Rizzetti, 'Heidelberg', in Richard Broome et al, eds., *Remembering Melbourne 1850-1960*, Royal Historical Society of Victoria, 2016, p282

⁷ Thom's estate designation was inspired by a novel of the same name by Sir Walter Scott (1819).

⁸ Ivanhoe & Alphington Progress Society, *Beautiful Ivanhoe: the suburb of model homes and scenic charm*, Model Studio, 1900, SLV

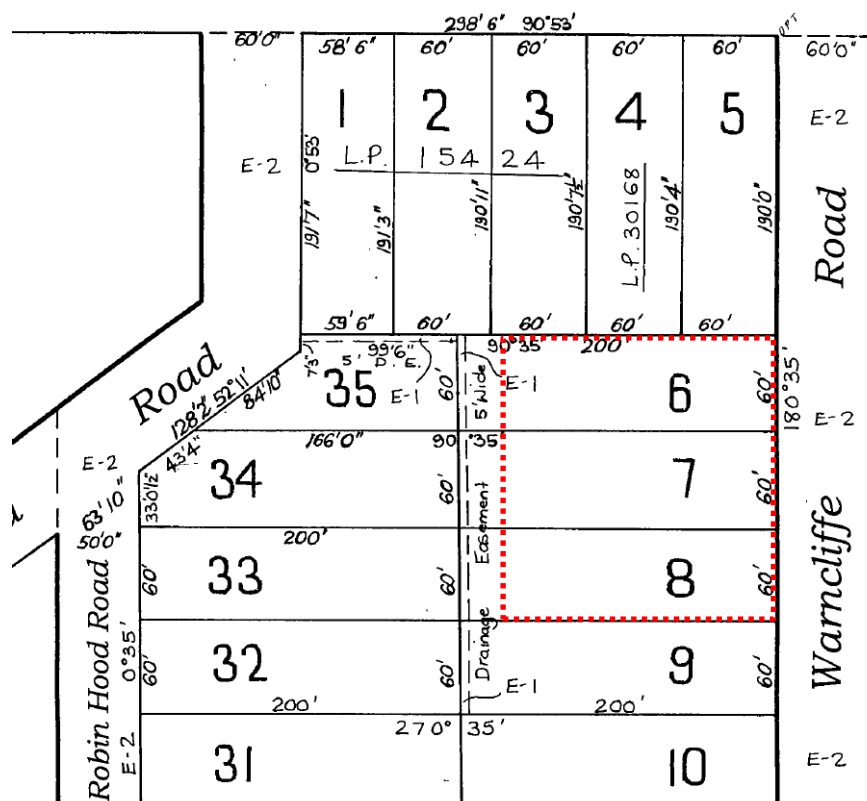
⁹ Ivanhoe Station opened in 1888; however, inefficiencies in the Heidelberg-Melbourne railway line initially bedevilled growth.

¹⁰ Ivanhoe grew from roughly 2,000 residents in 1913 to nearly 8,000 by 1933 (*Victorian Year Books*, Australian Bureau of Statistics).

¹¹ Don Garden, 'Ivanhoe', *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, July 2008

Site-specific

The subject land was part of a 35-lot subdivision that was formalised during October 1913 that had been part of extensive holdings in the area of Phillip Champion Cresigny, bank inspector and William Lawson Davidson, accountant.¹² The lots were generally 60 x 200 feet (18.3 x 61 metres) and the subdivision was bound by Wallis Avenue (south) and Robin Hood Road (west), originally View Street.¹³ The subdivision may not have been widely advertised, if at all,¹⁴ as it was another four years before any lots were sold. The first sale was to John William Bainbridge, who acquired eight lots in 1917, including the subject site, when he was living in Banksia Street, Heidelberg.¹⁵ Within two years, a house had been erected for Bainbridge on lots 33-35, with an address to Wilfred Road.¹⁶ In May 1922, he acquired nearly all of the remaining lots in the subdivision (another 23).¹⁷



Subdivision, showing extent of subject site
(Source: LP6217)

There was an extensive subdivision in this part of Ivanhoe during the 1910s, with the adjoining area to the west being the Warwick Estate, offered for sale in 1914,¹⁸ and that to the east being the Charteris Estate during 1916.¹⁹ A contemporary article highlights the attraction of the area.

Land subdivision in the Heidelberg district is likely 'to be the most pronounced feature in' real estate in the near future. The 'beautiful Yarra valley, is now the one remaining segment of rural land in the metropolitan area. Air the rest/have been more or less reduced, to small paddocks and residential allotments in the past four or five years.'²⁰

¹² Certificates of Title, vol 2344, folio 777, and vol 3896, folio 073

¹³ Initially there were house allotments on the Lower Heidelberg Road frontage (Landata, LP6217).

¹⁴ Research on TROVE has not revealed any advertisements

¹⁵ Certificate of Title, vol 4043, folio 417 – lots nos 6-9 and 32-35. As such, he owned 31 of the 35 lots.

¹⁶ Bainbridge was listed in the *Sands & McDougall's Directory of Victoria* from 1919. He died in 1940 and eventually this land was sold to the Catholic Church to accommodate the Mother of God school.

¹⁷ Certificate of Title, vol 4573, folio 457

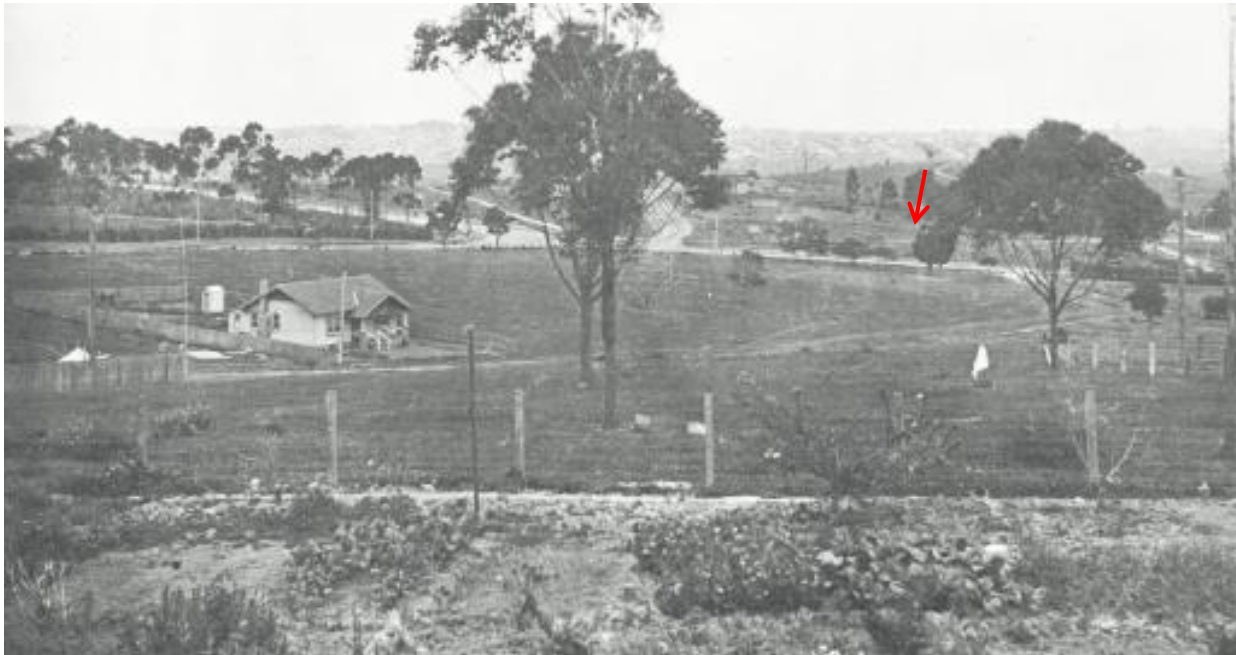
¹⁸ *Argus*, 14 February 1914, p2

¹⁹ Geo Parsons and Sons, 'Auction of the first section of the beautiful Charteris Estate at picturesque Ivanhoe', Haughton Collection, SLV. This brochure features contemporary images of the district.

²⁰ 'Heidelberg', *Herald*, 28 August 1913, p4

Suburban development in the area commenced during the mid-1920s and the choice of the Education Department for a new State School in Ivanhoe East to the south on Warnclyffe Road provided further impetus (acquired in 1926 from Bainbridge). At this time, the local Anglican community had to travel to St James Church at 252 Upper Heidelberg Road Ivanhoe (corner Noel Street), a considerable distance when motor cars were not widely affordable.²¹

On 12 December 1929, the Ivanhoe East Anglican community convened a meeting to organise church services and Sunday school classes in the area. Land in Warnclyffe Road owned by J W Bainbridge was purchased by the Diocese in April 1930 (most of lots 6-8). Church services were initially held once a month at the recently completed East Ivanhoe State School (no. 4386) to the south from 31 August 1930. The name for the new community was adopted soon after and so the St George's Mission was established within the Parish of St James.²² The subject site consisted of most of three lots (nos 6-8). The rural nature of the environs at this time is captured in the following photograph.



1928 view of Ivanhoe East from Maltravers Road

Approximate location of subject site indicated

(Source: Cyril Cummins, ed, *A Pictorial history of Heidelberg since 1836*, 1982, p95)

A sketch design for a hall, with a sanctuary that could be closed off, was prepared in 1931 by T E Routley of the St George's Committee and featured in a four-page pamphlet used for fund-raising:

The Diocese has agreed that if £400 be raised it will make the deeds available in order that the necessary money may be borrowed to erect the hall, which will cost about £850, and we earnestly appeal to you to assist in making its early erection possible.²³

A contemporary aerial photograph shows that the site was vacant at that time and that limited development had occurred in the vicinity, though mostly in Warnclyffe Road – the school and five houses. The Bainbridge house, *Drumrossie*, is evident with a well-established garden and perimeter planting directly to the west of the subject place.

²¹ Bruce Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe: a golden jubilee history 1929-79*, East Ivanhoe 1979, pp6-7

²² Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe*, p7; and Certificate of Title, vol 5650, folio 967

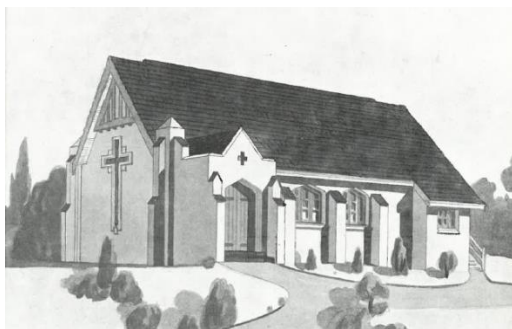
²³ Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe*, pp8-9



1931 aerial, showing approximate location of subject site (dashed), *Drumrossie* (star) and Ivanhoe East State School (arrow)
(Source: Landata, Project no 1931, Run 17, Frame 3328)

The St George's Hall was opened on 1 March 1936 by the Archbishop, the Most Rev. F W Head. Designed to be extended, it consisted of two bays, both 20 x 12 feet, and was more modest in detail than the original sketch due to necessary economies. The Ladies Guild made a major contribution to the building fund, raising £260.²⁴

A Tudor Revival-style house opposite the site, which was constructed circa 1940, was acquired during the early 1960s as a vicarage. The house had initially been occupied by Mrs Martha Love for at least 15 years.²⁵



Original hall design, 1931
(Source: B Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church*, p9)



Completed hall, circa 1950s
(Source: B Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church*, p13)

²⁴ B Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe*, pp13-14

²⁵ Sands & McDougalls directories.

The original extent of the hall, that is the eastern part, is evident in a 1945 aerial (below). More houses had been constructed adjacent on the east side of Warnccliffe Road, including the Vicarage at no. 46, and street planting is evident.



1945 aerial, showing eastern half of the original hall completed.
The house now used as the vicarage opposite at no. 46 (arrow) had been constructed.
(Source: DELWP, Ringwood_849A1A, <https://services.land.vic.gov.au/DELWPmaps/historical-photomaps/>)

After the Second World War, the rapidly growing local population exacerbated the cramped quarters of the original section of the hall. Fundraising was undertaken from at least 1950 as the original section was capable of seating about 50 people and by May 1951, plans had been prepared for its extension and 'building was to commence soon'.²⁶ This proposal however was not realised for another two years when the earlier building was doubled in length to the west. The original section of the hall was employed as a church – the altar was moved to the east end and furnished in a more church-like manner. Sliding doors separated the two sections but both could be used together if necessary.²⁷ The second part was opened by the Archbishop of Melbourne, the Most Reverend Joseph Booth, on 13 December 1953.²⁸

A new dedicated church however was the dream on the horizon and was noted in a contemporary article relating to the 1953 opening:

Parishioners of St. George's, Ivanhoe, have given church furnishings, costing hundreds of pounds, for the extension to St. George's hall to be used as a church. These have been designed so that they may be used in the permanent church when built. Archbishop Booth will dedicate the extension tomorrow at 3 p.m., when the mayor of Heidelberg- (Cr. W. J. Boyd) and Mrs. Boyd will attend. The Archbishop will also unveil and dedicate a memorial stone.²⁹

A 1954 aerial photograph, reproduced below, shows the full extent of the original hall and the increased development in the area including the nearby shops on the south side of Lower Heidelberg Road. *Drumbrossie* (formerly Bainbridge's house), adjoining to the west, remained in its extensive garden setting.

²⁶ 'Work for Church and Hospital', *Age*, 11 May 1951, p5

²⁷ Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe*, pp18-19

²⁸ Foundation stone on north side of the earlier church/hall section

²⁹ 'Gifts by Parishioners', *Age*, 12 December 1953, p18



1954 aerial photograph, with full extent of original hall evident, subject place outlined in dashed red
(Source: Landata, Project no 174, Run 15, Frame 75)

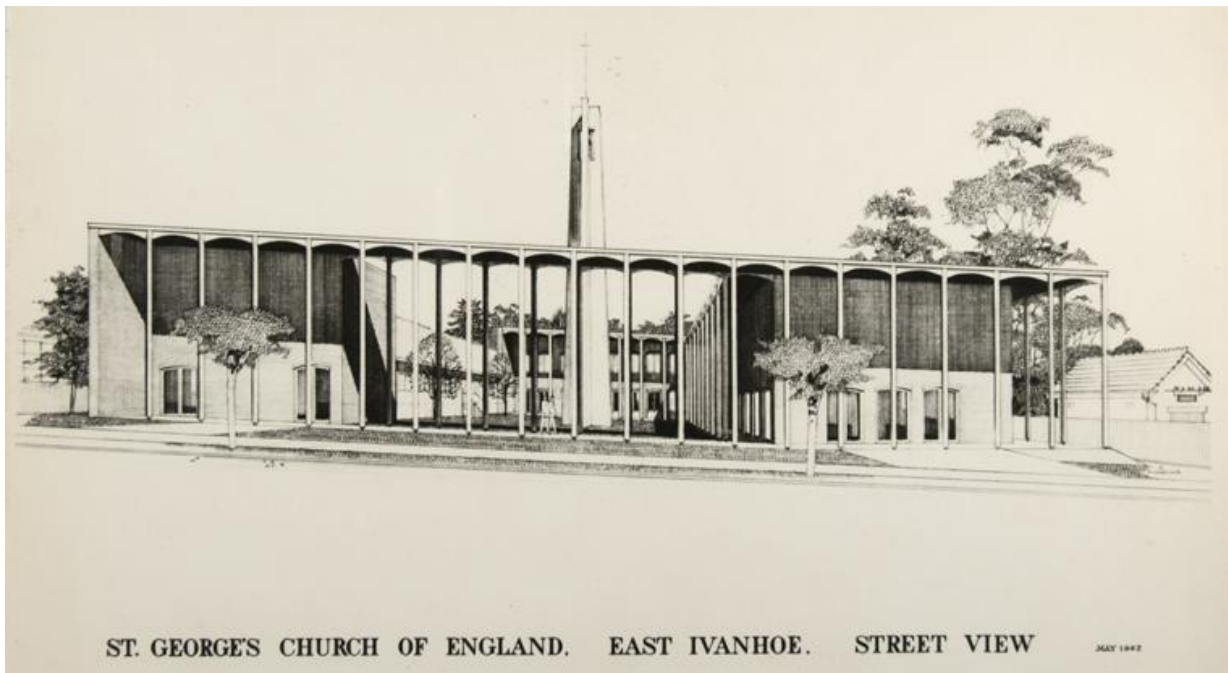
With continuing growing enrolments in the Sunday School, and the newly established kindergarten, a Campaign Committee was formed in 1955 to create a separate Parish and expand the facilities at the site. The Diocese required the establishment of a vicarage as a pre-requisite to parish status being granted. To that end, the house at 46 Warncliffe Road, opposite the site was acquired in April 1957. A master plan was developed in 1958 and the noted architect Louis Williams, who was responsible for many Anglican projects, was approached to prepare drawings. The project was to be staged. However, over the next few years the priorities were changed, culminating with the appointment of the first vicar, Rev H R Bailey (1959-61) of the St Georges Parish, which was officially created on 1 December 1959. The second Rev, Norman Hill (1961-68), oversaw another shift in that applications from other architects were sought in early 1962.³⁰

An initial letter to Grounds, Romberg and Boyd from the Vestry of St George's Church of England sought a submission, which was recorded as having been received by Robin Boyd on 20 March 1962. The practice responded indicating that sketches and estimates could be prepared by 13 May of that year. On 19 April 1962, Frederick Romberg met with representatives from the church when the budget was estimated at £50,000. The secretary of the Vestry of St George's Church of England wrote to Romberg on 27 April 1962 confirming his appointment and a detailed brief was prepared.³¹

³⁰ Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe*, pp20-27

³¹ Grounds, Romberg and Boyd Collection, SLV, MS 13363, various boxes (at the time being re-numbered and re-packaged). Other records relating to the site are contained in Box 34 (drawings), box 141 (Specification, March 1963). There also records in the public building files held at PROV relating to the site, which were not reviewed (VPRS 7882/ P1, unit 967, item 8270 and VPRS 7882/ P1, unit 1607, item 13565).

The commission was gained about the time the practice of Grounds, Romberg and Boyd dissolved in an acrimonious manner over the National Gallery of Victoria commission, which was taken over by (Sir) Roy Grounds, causing Frederick Romberg and Robin Boyd to form a separate practice. Within both practices, the principal architects are known to have generally worked on projects separately.



Perspective with free-standing belltower – May 1962
(Source: RMIT design archives)

Romberg's initial drawings were well-received and adopted in principle on 29 May 1962. Authorisation was given in August to prepare the detailed plans and specifications and tenders were called in January 1963.³²

By early-1963, the practice of 'Romberg and Boyd' was identified on the documentation. Generally, the internal correspondence includes the initials FR, but on one occasion RB was noted (presumably referring to Robin Boyd), possibly when Romberg was unavailable.³³

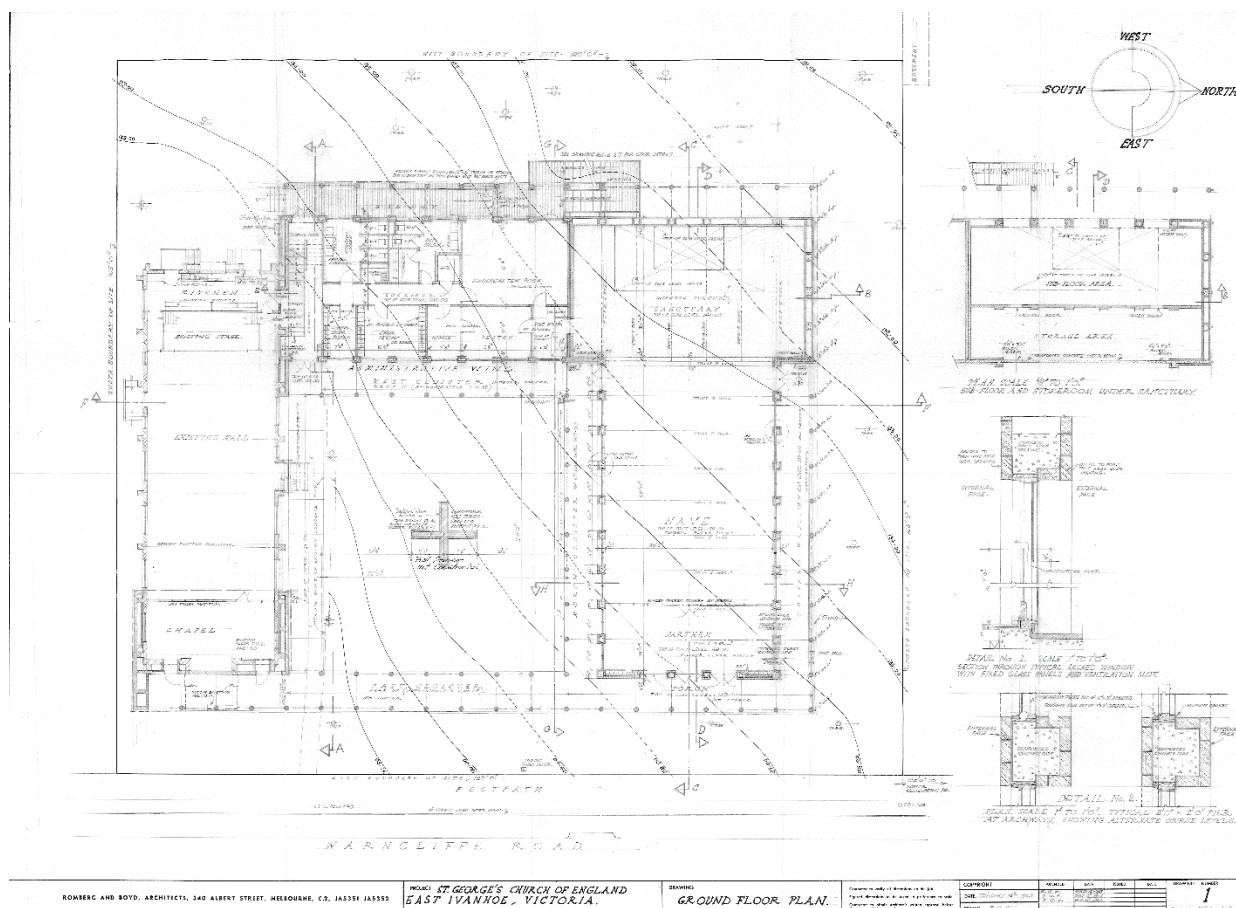
The initials BGH appears on the drawings, referring to Bernice Harris, who also was a witness on the contract drawings. Bernice Harris, an associate of Romberg & Boyd, was responsible for the working sketches, detailed drawings and the specification.³⁴ 'Missie' Harris, as she was known, was evidently a practically minded person who generally took responsibility for contract documentation, supervision and administration, together with the general business of 'running the office'.³⁵

³² Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe*, pp27-28

³³ Grounds, Romberg and Boyd Collection, SLV, MS 133363. Initials of other members of staff include BM, BC and FR. It is not known who these refer to.

³⁴ Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe*, p31

³⁵ Berenice Harris, 'Homage to Robin Boyd', *Architecture in Australia*, vol 62, no 2, April 1973, p77, reproduced in Deborah White, 'Women and Architecture Revisited', *Parlour*, 28 March 2018, available online



Ground Floor Plan, dated 15 January 1963
(Source: St Georges Church archives)

Over the course of 1963, the financial realities were resolved. In May, the Vestry of St George's placed a cap of £60,000 on the project and in June, approval was received from the Archbishop if the amount borrowed was less than £45,000. A loan of that amount was secured by September. The tender from R F Anderson P/L was accepted for £61,614, although excising the belltower, which would have cost another £3,081. Building work commenced in October and the foundation stone was laid on 8 December 1963.³⁶ The original/front part of the earlier hall was demolished to accommodate the new works.

By May 1964, the mural had been installed in the sanctuary wall and was said to be first of its kind in Australia, consisting of glass melted onto the bricks. In June 1964, preparations were underway for the opening later in the year. At that time, the brickwork of the church and crypt had been completed, and work was progressing on the rear two-storey part.³⁷

The building took eleven months to complete and was dedicated by the Archbishop of Melbourne, Frank Woods, on 7 November 1964. The T-shaped church was 104 feet long (31.7m) and 40 feet (12.2m) wide to the nave though widening to 56 feet (17m) at the sanctuary; all sections with a ceiling height of 27 feet (8.2m). Three hundred people could be accommodated in the nave with another one hundred people in the narthex if necessary. Audio-visual equipment was concealed and a large crypt included. The two-storey section (west wing) links the new church with the remaining earlier hall section consisting of two vestries, kindergarten, storage areas at ground floor with activities hall and kitchen to the first floor.³⁸

³⁶ Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe*, pp28-29. Rupert F Anderson were responsible for Royal Freemasons Homes, Horsham Base Hospital, Burnley Horticultural College, and Horsham Town Hall (1938-39).

³⁷ Grounds, Romberg and Boyd Collection SLV, MS 133363. Details from 'The Sword of St George', vol 4, no 4, June 1964, p1

³⁸ Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe*, pp30-32



Frontage, 1964/65 (note incorrect catalogue entry at SLV)

Note the dark colour/finish of the poles, gutters and window frames with the contrasting muted colour of the arched facias

(Source: SLV, Peter Willie Collection, H91.244-4224)

The fabric entailed 200,000 modular bricks manufactured by Selkirk of Ballarat and a Brownbuilt steel deck roof, which follows the profile of the sloping ground. The 70 lofty columns – oiled gum tree trunks more than 30 feet high [9.15 metres] – were provided by H Beecham and Co. The church furniture was manufactured by F Fallow & Sons.³⁹

A request for memorials resulted in several generous contributions, including the pulpit, sanctuary furniture, and pews, as well as the solid bronze font and towards the never-realised bell tower. The hall was named after Gwylm Jack Russell Evans, a key parishioner who died in 1963.

The mosaic mural of 'Christ in Glory' – 14 foot (4.3 metres) high in baked bricks – was designed by Jean Atkins, a member of the congregation. The design was painted in an earthenware glaze onto 244 ordinary smooth modular bricks, the bricks numbered, and then refired at 1080 degrees centigrade before being re-assembled by the bricklayers into the wall 'like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle'.⁴⁰ Jean had studied art at RMIT and although experienced with pottery, this was a new process for her. The limited tonal palette is in part a result of the high temperatures required to manufacture the bricks.⁴¹

The distinctive bronze baptismal font was created by Lithuanian-born sculptor Vincez Jemantis (1922-2001).⁴² Jemantis emigrated to Australia in 1948, initially living in Western Australia, before moving to Victoria in 1950, where he worked variously as house painter, toy factory worker, furniture factory worker, and a draughtsman with the State Rivers and Water Supply

³⁹ Romberg & Boyd, Press release, 3 October 1967 and 'Memorandum - St George's Church of England, East Ivanhoe', 4 October 1967, RMIT Design archives

⁴⁰ Romberg & Boyd, 'Memorandum - St George's Church of England, East Ivanhoe', 4 October 1967, [held at

⁴¹ Skeggs, *St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe*, p31. Atkins' involvement included regularly overseeing the manufacturing process at Selkirk's Ballarat brickworks and assisting with the installation in order to avoid the bricklayers tossing the specially-fired bricks.

⁴² The spelling of his name is either Vincez Jemantis or Vincas Jomantas.

Commission of Victoria. In 1961 he commenced working in the art/sculpture department at RMIT, where he remained until his retirement in 1987.⁴³



Circa 1964/65 – Rear (north-west corner)
(Source: SLV, Peter Willie Collection, H91.244-4223)

Photographs by Peter Willie show the eucalypts at the rear of the site must have been purposely retained. The two trees in the south side of the courtyard had also been planted. These photographs show the building essentially as it is except for the original dark colour/finish to the bush poles (colonnade), gutters and window frames and the contrasting muted colour of the arched fascias, which have all been painted in red-brown scheme.

Some minor changes are known to have occurred such as replacement of the original blue carpet to the interior of the church.

Frederick Romberg (1913-92)

Frederick Romberg was born to Else (Elspeth) and Kurt Romberg, judge, in Tsingtao, a former German enclave in east China, during 1913.⁴⁴

On returning to Germany, the family lived in Hamburg and Munich, but after the Nazis came to power, they left the country. Having studied both architecture and law for a while in Germany, Romberg continued with architectural studies at the ETH in Zurich from 1933. There he became familiar with the technique of reinforced concrete, especially as he was tutored by an expert in the field, Otto Salvisberg. He came to Melbourne in 1938 on a travelling scholarship to escape the political situation in Europe.⁴⁵

⁴³ Biography associated with two images of the font at SLV, H2007.33/278 + 279. At RMIT, Jemantis as initially appointed as a temporary instructor in art. For two years he shared a studio with painter Leonard French in Cheltenham. In 1965 he was appointed as Lecturer in Sculpture, RMIT, becoming Senior Lecturer in Sculpture during 1973.

⁴⁴ Phillip Goad, *Melbourne Architecture*, The Watermark Press, 1999, p250

⁴⁵ Conrad Hamann, 'Roy Grounds, Frederick Romberg and Robin Boyd', in Howard Tanner, ed, *Architects of Australia*, 1981, p132

In Melbourne, Romberg soon gained independent commissions. During the 1940s, he was responsible for two significant apartment buildings located near each other on Queens Road: *Newburn* at no. 30 (1939-42) with Mary Turner Shaw and *Stanhill* (1940-45) at no 34. Some of his other notable early projects are apartments: *Glenunga* at 2 Hornsurch Grove, Armadale (1940-1) with Mary Turner Shaw and *Hilstan*, Nepean Highway, Brighton (1950), demolished during the 1970s. His work of this period has been defined as being a fusion of European modernism and 'Heimatsstil', or homeland style, a Swiss movement in which it was acceptable to use traditional materials, wood and stone, in a contemporary design. The design of these buildings is multi-faceted in regards forms, and in some cases, also materials.

From the early 1940s, few private construction projects were possible, and during the Second World War most architects were seconded to work on military projects including Romberg. It was not until the early 1950s, that material shortages were alleviated and that architects were gainfully employed again. About this time, in 1953, he entered into partnership with Roy Grounds and Robin Boyd to form Grounds Romberg and Boyd, which was the most eminent architectural practice in Melbourne during the 1950s. Although in partnership, the three architects rarely collaborated and projects have been usually credited to one architect in particular. With the departure of Grounds in 1962, the practice was renamed Romberg and Boyd, which continued from East Melbourne until Boyd's premature death in 1971.⁴⁶

Within both iterations of the practice, Romberg became the specialist in industrial, commercial, and institutional work. Leading projects included the ETA Factory, Braybrook (1957-61), which was a landmark example of modern factory design. He also began to experiment with the centrally planned, geometric architecture that Grounds had pioneered with his residential work early during the 1950s such as the Sacred Heart Girls' School, Oakleigh (1954) at and Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Canberra (1960) were both square in plan, while the Ormond College buildings Picken Court (1959), MacFarland Library (1962), and McCaughey Court (1965) were polygonal. The Microbiology building (1965) at the University of Melbourne was more overtly Brutalist.

Romberg was, however, appointed the Professor of Architecture at the University of Newcastle in 1965, where he remained for a decade before returning to Melbourne. After his return to Melbourne in 1975, he continued a small practice into the early 1980s.⁴⁷

Thematic Context

Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, October 2018:

- Theme 5: Suburban development

See also Allom Lovell & Associates, *Banyule Heritage Place Study: An Urban History*, vol 1, July 1999:

- Theme 6: Community and cultural life

Comparative Analysis

There are nine churches included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay in Banyule.⁴⁸ Of these, only one dates from the second half of the 20th century:

- *St Bernadette's Church*, 89-91 Bond Street, Ivanhoe (HO181) – a modernist Catholic church designed by Robert O Ellis and constructed 1961-62. It has a prow-like form and curved sidewalls of cream brick with concrete structural elements. Some design components, particularly the elliptical tower and random window configuration (sidewalls), reflect the influence of Le Corbusier's seminal *Chapel of Notre Dame du Haut* at Ronchamp (1955). *St Bernadette's* has a traditional interior, consisting of a long nave and remote sanctuary.

The above church and the other proposed for a HO by this Study (*Mother of God Catholic Church*) are more traditional, or recognisable as churches in their form as they have pitched roofs, while reflecting a contemporary design approach and detailing that indicate their period of construction.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Hamann, 'Roy Grounds, Frederick Romberg and Robin Boyd', p129

⁴⁷ Hamann, 'Roy Grounds, Frederick Romberg and Robin Boyd', p139

⁴⁸ HO14, HO78, HO86, HO88, HO108, HO115, HO181, HO182, and HO183

⁴⁹ In the municipality, Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell were also responsible for designing the small chapel at Ivanhoe Grammar School (1981) It has a slate-clad domed roof with a cross at the apex and appears to be constructed of light-tinted concrete blocks with sections of window walls. The chapel is located adjacent to the east side of The Ridgeway, roughly mid-way between Latham and Rose streets, but is largely obscured by fencing and foliage. See Norman Day, 'School Chapel', *Age*, 15 December 1981, p10

While St Bernadette's and the nearby *Mother of God* are distinctive examples at the local level, *St Georges Anglican Church Complex* is more distinguished and/or unique at a broader level. There are few if any major, urban buildings where bush poles have been employed on such a grand scale. Employment of bush poles has strong associations with vernacular Australian architecture, especially agricultural buildings, as well trestle bridges. Roy Grounds employed them during the 1930s on two residential projects – *Lyncroft* and *Chateau Tabilk*.⁵⁰ A tall bush pole colonnade had also previously been used by Robin Boyd at the *Black Dolphin Motel*, Merimbula (NSW) in 1958-60. Romberg himself employed them again to the wrap around verandah of the *Bangerang Cultural Centre* in Shepparton of 1978.

Employment of strict geometric footprint was a standard feature of Romberg's later work. He had employed the square plan at *Sacred Heart Girls School*, Oakleigh (1954) and the *Holy Trinity Lutheran Church*, Canberra (1960). The former includes a central courtyard and distinct areas of solid and void relating to functional requirements similar to St Georges and the latter is defined by a central spire. He had used a similarly exaggerated verandah consisting of tall supports at the *Lutheran College*, Croydon (1958).⁵¹

St Georges Church Complex is distinguished from many other late 20th century churches by its cuboid form and lack of an instantly recognised element associated with Christian religious buildings such as a spire-like element, although a tall belfry was proposed but not realised. Another notable example of a cuboid form being employed in Melbourne about this time is the *St James Anglican Church* at 1461 High Street, Glen Iris of 1959 by Bogle Banfield and Associates.

Intactness

Intact

Previous Assessment

- RBA Architects + Conservation Consultants, *Banyule Heritage Study 2020: Stage 1 report*, Banyule City Council, August 2020 – High priority, recommended for Stage 2

Heritage Overlay Schedule Controls

External Paint Controls	Yes (timber elements)
Internal Alteration Controls	Yes (church interior)
Tree Controls	Yes (four eucalypts to north-west corner, two exotics to courtyard)
Outbuildings and/or fences	No

⁵⁰ Jill Sheppard Heritage Consultants, 'Penders - The Grounds & Myer Holiday Retreat, Mimosa Rocks National Park CMP', December 2002, p67

⁵¹ Harriet Edquist, ed, *Frederick Romberg, the Architecture of Migration 1938-1975*, RMIT Press, 2000, pp45-46, 50-54, 95

Extent of Heritage Overlay

The proposed extent of the heritage overlay is outlined approximately below.



Recommended extent of heritage overlay
(Source: Nearmap, March 2021)